



# NEWS RELEASE

## EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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President George W. Bush  
For Immediate Release

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### FEDERAL AGENCIES AGREE ON IMPROVED PIPELINE PERMITTING PROCESS *Fosters More Effective Environmental Performance and Compliance*

The White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) announced today an interagency agreement that will improve coordination and cooperation on the permitting of natural gas transmission pipelines. Ten federal agencies have agreed to initiate discussions earlier in the permitting process and to perform simultaneous rather than concurrent reviews, which will foster more effective decision making and compliance with environmental and historic preservation laws.

The agreement, which was coordinated by the White House Task Force on Energy Project Streamlining, fulfills a 1999 directive to improve interagency cooperation on pipeline permitting. The result will be a more efficient permitting process, better use of federal resources, and an improved process for public involvement.

The President's National Energy Policy recognized the need for a clean, safe and reliable energy supply and the infrastructure to deliver it. Multiple layers of jurisdiction and decision making in pipeline permitting hamper the ability of federal agencies to make timely decisions on whether to approve projects, some of which have been delayed months or even years.

“One of the largest barriers to expanding the use of clean-burning natural gas relates to production and pipeline constraints,” said James L. Connaughton, Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality. “The environmental benefits of natural gas can only be realized if the supply can reach the consumer. With demand for natural gas expected to increase 50 percent by 2020, this agreement will enhance our ability to provide one of the cleanest energy sources to Americans.”

Parties to the agreement include the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Transportation, and Energy; the Environmental Protection Agency; the Council on Environmental Quality; the Army Corps of Engineers; the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. A copy of the agreement may be found at [www.etf.energy.gov](http://www.etf.energy.gov).

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The White House Task Force on Energy Project Streamlining was established on May 18, 2001, when President Bush signed Executive Order 13212 (Actions to Expedite Energy-Related Projects). As recommended by the National Energy Policy Development Group, the Executive Order established an interagency task force headed by the Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). The Task Force's primary mission is to "work with and monitor Federal Agencies' efforts to expedite their review of permits or take other actions as necessary to accelerate the completion of energy-related permits, while maintaining safety, public health, and environmental protections."

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